



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Land Management
National Park Service
Bureau of Indian Affairs

Western Alaska Moose Management: A Success Story Federal Subsistence Board

December 10, 2002



How did the population of moose in Unit 17(A)'s Togiak and Kulukak River drainages increase from as few as 10 moose in the 1980s and early 1990s, to 652 moose by February of 2002?

Western Alaska's Togiak and Twin Hills communities, including Dillingham, Aleknagik, and Manokotak, have worked closely with Federal and State biologists and wildlife managers since the mid-1990's to develop a cooperative moose management plan for the Togiak and Kulukak River valleys of Unit 17(A). The Federal Subsistence Board and the Bristol Bay Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council use the plan as a guide when deciding on proposed changes to Federal Subsistence Management moose hunting regulations for the area. In addition to the management plan, other factors contributing to the increased numbers include moose immigrating from neighboring Unit 17(C), regulation changes implemented by the Federal Subsistence Board and Alaska Board of Game, reduction of illegal harvests during 1995-96 because of poor travel conditions, changing attitudes of local residents, availability of the expanding Mulchatna Caribou Herd in Units 17 and 18, increases in moose population in Unit 17(A) due to mild winters, few predators and excellent habitat.

What is the Unit 17(A) moose management strategy?

The plan addresses the need for coordinated management consistent with State and Federal laws and regulations, and the traditional lifestyles of area residents. The plan includes population goals before hunting seasons will occur and bulls-only harvest permits to protect cow moose. Until the moose population reaches the minimum numbers set in the management plan, the Board would not approve a hunt on affected Federal lands. Togiak National Wildlife Refuge manages about 84% of Unit 17(A).

How does the plan work?

The moose management plan outlines ways to ensure the health, continued growth and viability of the moose population in Unit 17(A). This includes maintaining a minimum resident population of 300 moose; a bull:cow ratio of not less than 30 bulls:100 cows; and a cautious annual harvest that allows the population to continue to grow. Management and continued monitoring of the moose population is ongoing, with the plan continually being updated and improved to increase its effectiveness. The plan has worked so well that Unit 17(A) communities are now working to help expand the moose population into the adjacent Goodnews and Kanektok River drainages of Unit 18. Unit 17(A) also now has an existing fall moose hunting season and soon a limited winter hunt will occur.

For more information, please contact Dave Fisher at the Office of Subsistence Management, (800) 478-1456 or (907) 786-3866 (dave_fisher@fws.gov), or fax: (907) 786-3898. TTY users may call through the Federal Relay Service on (800) 877-8339.